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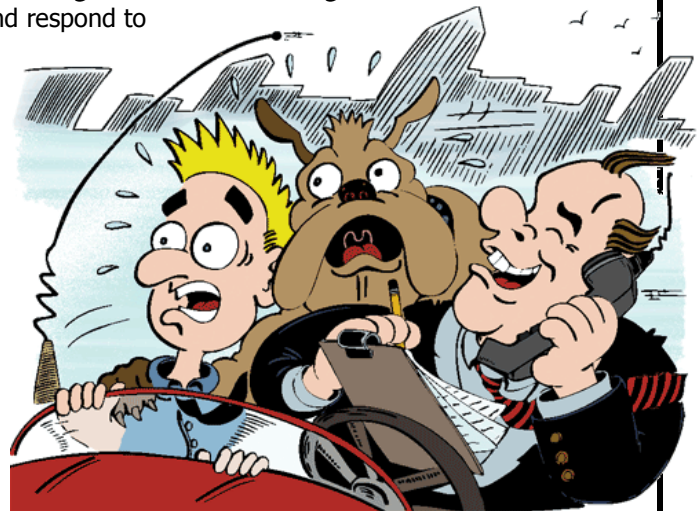
26 May 2011

Driver Distractions – They’re Everywhere

Driving requires your full attention to safely control your vehicle and respond to events happening on the roads around you. Driving involves constant and complex coordination between your mind and body. Events or things that prevent you from operating your car safely are distractions. The safe operation of your car or truck is your primary responsibility. Do not let these distractions prevent you from the safe operation of your vehicle.

Some common driving distractions include:

- ◆ Cell phone use
- ◆ Reading or sending text messages
- ◆ Reaching for a moving object inside the vehicle
- ◆ Looking at an object or event outside of the vehicle
- ◆ Reading a newspaper, map, or document
- ◆ Applying makeup
- ◆ Playing with the GPS or other electronic gadget



Here are some reminders for driving safely without distractions:

- ◆ Perform a quick visual on the floor of your car. Pick-up anything that might roll under your seat and become lodged under the brake or accelerator.
- ◆ Always buckle up.
- ◆ Keep your hands on the wheel and your eyes on the road.
- ◆ Never read or send text messages while driving.
- ◆ Use cell phones safely. The safest thing is to make your calls before you set out. If you receive a cell phone call while you are driving, let the caller leave a message, pull over, and call that person back. Be aware that using a hands-free, voice-activated cell phone can still distract you.
- ◆ Arguments or stressful conversations with passengers can also divert the driver's attention from the road. We know better than to drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, but fatigue, stress and strong emotions such as anger can also impair the ability to drive safely.
- ◆ A safe driver also stops before checking maps and addresses, looking at paperwork, and dealing with similar distractions.
- ◆ Avoid playing with your electronic gadgets. Put them away before you drive. Program your GPS before you begin your trip.
- ◆ Fiddling with the radio or vehicle sound system, adjusting heaters, and digging items out of the glove box while driving can be even more distracting than cell phones and all have caused vehicle crashes.
 - ◆ Don't eat or drink while driving. If you are on a long road trip, stop every couple of hours to stretch and eat a snack.
 - ◆ Don't apply make-up, shave, or any other primping that may distract you from the road.



Drive safe and stay alive. Keep your mind on your driving; keep your eyes on the road, and your hands on the wheel!